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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/085,292	02/28/2002	John Bieda	VEL-464-A	1117
7590	01/12/2004		EXAMINER	
Andrew R. Basile Young & Basile, P.C. Suite 624 3001 West Big Beaver Road Troy, MI 48084			SUN, XIUQIN	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			2863	
			DATE MAILED: 01/12/2004	

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Offic Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/085,292	BIEDA ET AL.	
	Examiner Xiuqin Sun	Art Unit 2863	MW

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on _____.
 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-31 is/are pending in the application.
 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
 5) Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
 6) Claim(s) 1-9, 14-20, 23-27 and 31 is/are rejected.
 7) Claim(s) 10-13, 21, 22 and 28-30 is/are objected to.
 8) Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
 10) The drawing(s) filed on 28 February 2002 is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

13) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application) since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.
 a) The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.

14) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121 since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____.
 4) Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s) _____.
 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
 6) Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

1. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(a) the invention was known or used by others in this country, or patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country, before the invention thereof by the applicant for a patent.

2. Claims 1-9, 14-18 and 23-25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(a) as being anticipated by Nasr et al. (U.S. Pub. No. 20020023251).

Nasr et al. teach a method of determining product performance comprising the steps of (Fig. 2): collecting product performance data (sections 0048 and 0076); determining the failure mode of detected product failures (sections 0080, 0081, 0085 and 0106); conducting a failure mode effect and analysis procedure to determine a degree of risk of a detected failure (sections 0009 and 0080-0111); and developing corrective action to correct the detected failures (sections 0012, 0013 and 01112). Nasr et al. further teach the steps of: determining the severity of the effect of each failure (sections 0080, 0081 and 0091); and determining the frequency of occurrence of the effect of each failure (sections 0080, 0081 and 0092); ranking the determined severity of effects of a plurality of different detected failures to generate a plurality of different severity ranking values (sections 0093, 0104 and 0105); and ranking the determined frequency of occurrences of a plurality of different failures in ranked frequency of occurrence values (sections 0093, 0104, 0105 and 0124); determining a preliminary risk

assessment of each failure as a product of the ranked severity value and the selected ranked frequency of occurrence value (sections 0009, 0080-0082, 0093, 0095, 0104, 0105 and 0107); comparing the preliminary risk assessment with a threshold to determine high risk assessments (section 0105); determining the root cause of detected product failures for product failures having a preliminary risk assessment at least equal to a threshold (sections 0081, 0086, 0092, 0097 and 0102); assigning a severity rank value to the each failure effect (sections 0093, 0104 and 0105); and assigning a rank value to the determined frequency of occurrence of each failure effect (sections 0093, 0104, 0105 and 0124); verifying the corrective action (sections 0108, 0118, 0119, 0123 and 0125); ranking a validation of a failure corrective action based on at least one of the type of validation test, the sample size and the test time (sections 0108; 0118, 0119 and 0141); determining the cost of quality assessment (sections 0118-0120 and 0141); and determining the total cost of quality assessment by the sum of prevention costs, appraisal costs and failure costs (sections 0118-0120, 0126, 0129, 0130 and 0141).

Nasr et al. further teach a method and apparatus of determining product performance comprising the steps and means of (Fig. 2): collecting product performance data (sections 0048 and 0076); determining the failure mode of detected product failures (sections 0080, 0081, 0085 and 0106); determining frequency and/or probability of occurrence of each detected failure (sections 0080, 0081 and 0092); ranking the frequency and/or probabilities of occurrence of each failure to obtain an occurrence value (sections 0093, 0104, 0105 and 0124); determining the severity of effects of each failure (sections 0080, 0081 and 0091); ranking the severity effects of

each failure to obtain a ranked severity effect value (sections 0093, 0104 and 0105); and determining a preliminary risk assessment of each failure as a product of the ranked severity value and the ranked frequency of occurrence value (sections 0009, 0080-0082, 0093, 0095, 0104, 0105 and 0107).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. Claims 19, 20, 26 and 27 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nasr et al. in view of Bjornson et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6505145).

Nasr et al. teach a method and apparatus that includes the subject matter discussed above. Nasr et al. do not mention explicitly: developing a corrective action to the determined root cause of the detected product failure.

Bjornson et al. disclose an apparatus and method of determining product performance, comprising the step of developing a corrective action to the determined root cause of the detected product failure (Abstract; col. 3, lines 62-67; col. 6-7, lines 56-3 and col. 7, lines 24-45).

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to include the teachings of Bjornson et al. in the invention of Nasr

et al. in order to provide the right corrective action to the determined root cause to correct the underling failure (Bjornson et al., col.7, lines 24-45).

5. Claim 31 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nasr et al. in view of McMann et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5014220).

Nasr et al. teach a method and apparatus that includes the subject matter discussed above. Nasr et al. do not mention explicitly: defining a threshold as a customer override input for comparing the preliminary risk assessment with the threshold.

McMann et al. disclose a method and system for generating reliability models for use with a reliability evaluation tool, and suggest the step of defining a threshold as a customer override input for comparing a risk or reliability assessment with the threshold (col. 2, lines 24-29; col. 8, lines 8, lines 17-32).

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to include the teachings of McMann et al. in the invention of Nasr et al. in order to manually control the criteria for conducting risk assessment (McMann et al., col. 2, lines 24-29).

Allowable Subject Matter

6. Claims 10-13, 21, 22 and 28-30 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Reasons for Allowance

7. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

The primary reason for the allowance of claims 10-11, 21-22 and 28-29 is the inclusion of the method step of determining a final risk assessment for each corrective action equal to the product of the determined severity value, the determined frequency of occurrence value and the determined failure correction validation value. It is this step found in each of the claims, as it is claimed in the combination that has not been found, taught or suggested by the prior art of record, which makes these claims allowable over the prior art.

The primary reason for the allowance of claims 12-13 is the inclusion of the method step of forming a plurality of selectable databases containing product performance data for at least two of field performance, product change request, manufacturing performance, validation performance, prototype and pilot build inspection, measurement system performance, simulation, supplier development performance, process control, production process capability performance, manufacturing preventive maintenance, engineering development test performance, lessons learned, engineering calculations, dimensional tolerance stack-up analysis, internal/external part interface analysis, new customer requirement, supplier requirement, cost improvement, drawing change and tool wear. It is this step found in each of the claims, as it is claimed in the combination that has not been found, taught or suggested by the prior art of record, which makes these claims allowable over the prior art.

The primary reason for the allowance of claim 30 is the inclusion of the method steps of defining the threshold as a severity value at least equal to one ranked severity value; and comparing the final risk assessment value with the threshold to determine failures requiring corrective action. It is these steps found in the claim, as they are claimed in the combination that has not been found, taught or suggested by the prior art of record, which make these claims allowable over the prior art.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Contact Information

8. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Xiuqin Sun whose telephone number is (703)305-3467. The examiner can normally be reached on 7:00am-4:30pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, John Barlow can be reached on (703)308-3126. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are (703)872-9306.

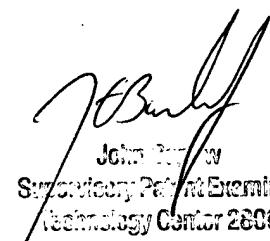
Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703)308-0956.

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December 31, 2003


John R. Burd
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